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|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>Notice of Allowability</b> | Application No. | Applicant(s)    |  |
|                               | 09/965,723      | BERTHOLD ET AL. |  |
|                               | Examiner        | Art Unit        |  |
|                               | Shay L Balsis   | 1744            |  |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1.  This communication is responsive to 11/25/03.
2.  The allowed claim(s) is/are 7-14 and 17-19.
3.  The drawings filed on 27 September 2001 are accepted by the Examiner.
4.  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a)  All
  - b)  Some\*
  - c)  None
  1.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3.  Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

5.  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
  - (a)  The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
6.  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application. **THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

7.  A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
8.  CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
  - (a)  including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review ( PTO-948) attached
    - 1)  hereto or 2)  to Paper No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (b)  including changes required by the proposed drawing correction filed \_\_\_\_\_, which has been approved by the Examiner.
  - (c)  including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No. \_\_\_\_\_.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the margin according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).

9.  DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

#### Attachment(s)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No. _____.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),<br>Paper No. _____  | <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit<br>of Biological Material | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |

Art Unit: 1744

### **REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE**

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claims 7, 8 and 19 include the limitations, "wherein said securing means comprises a strap having a first end and a second end, said first end being attached to a first side edge of said gripping member and said second end being attached to a second side edge of said gripping member" and "wherein said strap comprises a resiliently stretchable material". Van Staagen (USPN 6081958), Bean (USPN 2988049) and Wiest (USPN 2795808) all fail to teach these limitations, nor would it have been obvious to combine references to achieve the claimed invention. As stated in the previous office action claim 16 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has incorporated claim 16 into independent claim 8 and therefore the application is considered to be free from the prior art.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Shay L Balsis whose telephone number is presently 703-305-7275 after December 16, 2003 571-272-1268. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30-5:00 M-Th, alternating F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert J. Warden can be reached on 703-308-2920. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-306-5665.

Slb  
10/10/03

*Robert J. Warden, Sr.*  
**ROBERT J. WARDEN, SR.**  
**SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER**  
**TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1700**